

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 362
By Clabough

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Felice Bryant of Sevier
County.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Felice Bryant, a talented lyricist and the beloved creator of Tennessee's favorite song, "Rocky Top"; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Bryant was an exemplary citizen and a consummate humanitarian who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born Matilda Genevieve Scaduto in Milwaukee, Felice Bryant began her career as a songwriter as a child, composing lyrics to traditional Italian tunes; and

WHEREAS, in 1945, while Mrs. Bryant was working as an elevator operator in the Schroeder Hotel in Milwaukee, she met a fiddle player from Georgia and inspiration struck a chord deep within her heart; two days later, she eloped with Mr. Boudleaux Bryant, who bestowed upon her the nickname "Felice"; and

WHEREAS, Felice Bryant continued to make manifest her remarkable artistic gifts as a songwriter and lyricist as she co-wrote over 800 recorded songs with her husband; and

WHEREAS, among the many country and rock and roll hits penned by the Bryants are the earliest of the Everly Brothers hits, including “Bye, Bye Love” and “Wake Up, Little Suzy”, and songs recorded by such greats as Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, the Beach Boys, the Beatles, Bob Dylan, Ray Charles, Cher, R.E.M., Dean Martin, Ray Price, the Grateful Dead, Tony Bennett, Simon and Garfunkel, Roy Orbison, and Sarah Vaughan; and

WHEREAS, perhaps the Bryant’s most legendary composition, at least in the hearts of true Volunteers, is the bluegrass masterpiece and Tennessee standard, “Rocky Top”; and

WHEREAS, while working on a composition for Archie Campbell in Room 388 at the Gatlinburg Inn, their mountain getaway of choice, these sensational musicians took a short break, and, in ten minutes, “Rocky Top” was composed, and musical history was made; and

WHEREAS, a perennial favorite of devoted fans of University of Tennessee athletic events since 1972, this jaunty and carefree tune evokes fond memories of hearth and home for many a Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, the General Assembly designated “Rocky Top” as an official state song, recognizing and memorializing the brilliance and artistry of Felice and Boudleaux Bryant; and

WHEREAS, famous throughout the State with the general public and industry executives alike, the Bryants were highly regarded as the first full-time songwriters in Nashville and were honored with memberships in the Country Music Hall of Fame, the National Songwriters Hall of Fame, and the National Academy of Popular Music Songwriters Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, because of her remarkable influence on the country music industry and in the development of rock and roll, Felice Bryant will not soon be forgotten; this exceptional woman truly holds a place in the heart of our State and nation; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Bryant was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Felice Bryant enjoyed the loving companionship of her husband and fellow artist, Boudleaux Bryant, who died in 1987, and was the proud mother of Dane and Del Bryant, who will surely miss this fine woman; and

WHEREAS, Felice Bryant leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Felice Bryant, reflecting fondly upon her remarkable talent, her impeccable character, and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Bryant.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.